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SUBJECT: JULY 17 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: SUDAN, DIAOYU ISLANDS, IVORY
IMPORTS, TAIWAN ARMS SALES, IRAN

1. Key points at the July 17 afternoon MFA press briefing were:

-- China is willing to exchange views with "relevant countries" who seek to avoid the indictment of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir if Sudan hands over other war criminals.

-- China holds that it has "indisputable sovereignty" over the Diaoyu islands, and seeks to work with Japan to solve the dispute over the islands.

-- Asked to comment on NGO condemnation regarding a recent report that a UN panel will allow China to import African ivory, the spokesman said that China has implemented strict laws against illegal smuggling and sales of animal products, including ivory.

-- Asked about reports that the U.S. will suspend arms sales to Taiwan, the spokesman urged the U.S. to "honor the principles of the three joint communiqués and not do anything to undermine China-US military relations."

-- China welcomes the U.S. decision to send U/S Burns to the meeting between the EU High Representative Javier Solana and Iranian Chief Nuclear Negotiator Saeed Jalili in Geneva July 19.

Darfur

2. Asked whether China will support members of the UN Security Council seeking to avoid the indictment of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir if Sudan hands over other war criminals, spokesman Liu Jianchao said that China is concerned about the situation in Darfur and that the situation "should not be complicated by this move." Countries have differing views on this topic and "relevant countries" are discussing how to move ahead. China is willing to exchange views on this issue and has one purpose, "to safeguard peace and stability in Sudan and realize peace, stability and development of the Darfur region."

China - Japan Dispute over Diaoyu Islands

3. China holds that it has "indisputable sovereignty" over the Diaoyu islands, said Liu. China wants to work with Japan to solve the dispute over the islands and negotiate to find a resolution. In response to questions regarding reports that at least four Japanese textbooks claim the islands are Japanese territory, Liu said he had not seen any of the textbooks, but if they claim that the Diaoyu islands belong to Japan then it demonstrates that "Japan and China have differing positions on this issue."

UN Panel agrees to allow China to import Africa ivory

4. Asked about the condemnation coming from NGOs regarding a recent report that a UN panel will allow China to import African ivory, Liu said that NGOs should report the truth and not incorrectly accuse China of wrongdoing. The Chinese government wants to protect wildlife, including elephants, and has released a series of laws and regulations to stop illegal smuggling and the sale of illegal wildlife products. These laws have had "obvious results" and sales

have "plummeted remarkably," Liu said.

15. Asked about a report that two Chinese women were detained and questioned in the Nairobi airport with over 30 pieces of illegal ivory, the spokesman said he had just read the relevant report and would have to check the details before making a statement. It is the position of the Chinese government to crack down on the illegal smuggling and sale of ivory.

Arms Sales to Taiwan

16. Asked about reports that the U.S. will suspend arms sales to Taiwan, Liu said China has reiterated its position many times on U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and will closely follow the developments. China urges the U.S. to "honor the principles of the three joint communiqués, in particular the August 27 joint communiqué, and not do anything to undermine China-US military relations."

Iranian Nuclear Issue

17. Asked to comment on the U.S. decision to send U/S Burns to the meeting between the EU High Representative Javier Solana and Iranian Chief Nuclear Negotiator Saeed Jalili in Geneva July 19, Liu said that China welcomes the U.S. decision. China has always wanted a peaceful resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue through diplomatic negotiation and hopes that relevant parties will "resume negotiations, enhance efforts and show flexibility" toward the long-term resolution of the issue.

Veto against Sanctions for Zimbabwe

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18. Regarding U.S. displeasure with China's veto against sanctions for Zimbabwe, the spokesman said that China has clarified its position on the issue and the U.S. is clearly aware of China's position. It is "natural that we have different positions," the spokesman said.

Six-Party Talks

19. Asked about the possibility of the continuation of Six-Party Talks in the coming week, the spokesman said that some countries have proposed holding a Six-Party Ministerial meeting on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). China and the relevant parties are consulting with one another on those proposals, but no details have been finalized.

Dialogue with the Dalai Lama Envoy

110. Asked about reports that the Dalai Lama envoy sees no point in continuing dialogue with Beijing, the spokesman told reporters to refer the question to the relevant authorities of the Central Government. The government, Liu said, is sincere in its attempts to negotiate with the Dalai side and he wondered "the reason why" the Dalai envoy would make such comments.

ROK Tourist shot in DPRK

111. Asked to comment on a report that a South Korean tourist was shot dead in the DPRK and whether China would support the ROK in asking for international support for an independent investigation of the incident, Liu said that he had read the relevant reports and hopes that the ROK and DPRK will seek a proper resolution through dialogue that will not affect the improvement of their bilateral relationship.

Terrorism in China

¶12. Asked whether weapons or plots were discovered when authorities broke up 12 terrorist cells this year in China, Liu said he did not have specific details of the incidents and those questions should be referred to the relevant authorities. China's position remains that those engaged in terrorist activities shall be punished by law.

Chinese FM Yang to visit Singapore, Tajikistan and U.S.

¶13. Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi will attend a Minister's meeting of ASEAN plus China at the invitation of Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong from July 22 - 30. Asked who will accompany Yang to the ASEAN meeting, Liu said that the decision has not been made, but usually the officials responsible for the relevant departments of regional affairs accompany Yang.

¶14. Yang will also attend a meeting and pay an official visit to Tajikistan at the invitation of Tajik Foreign Minister Hamrokhon Zarifi. Following those meetings, Yang will visit the United States, at the invitation of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. When asked the exact date of the visit to the United States, the spokesman said he did not have the specific agenda, but "believed" Yang would be in the U.S. around July 28.

Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Liu to visit Geneva

¶15. Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Jieyi, together with the political Director Generals of the U.S., Russia, UK, Germany and France, will attend a meeting between the EU High Representative Javier Solana and Iranian Chief Nuclear Negotiator Saeed Jalili in Geneva July 19.

RANDT